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FEDERAL OPERATIVE BURNED BY GOVERNMENT, ATTORNEYS SAY
TAMPA, FL

A government operative who lured renegade CIA agent Edwin Wilson to his arrest was aiding authorities in another secret operation when he was charged with fraud, a defense attorney said.

August R. Von Keiser is scheduled for arraignment Thursday on charges he and two other men used fraud in an attempt to get \$60,000 from a former Tampa bank president who also faces federal prosecution. In another case, Keiser, who claims to have a 30-year career of U.S. government intelligence work, is charged with attempting to defraud a White Plains, N.Y., businessman of \$415,000.

Keiser's lawyer, however, contends the attempts to get money were part of government coordinated plans to trap fugitive financier Robert Vesco, The Orlando Sentinel reported Sunday.

'He has been cooperating with the government and the government has ended that by arresting him,' said Eugene Propper, a former federal attorney who is representing Keiser in Tampa.

William Aronwald, Keiser's attorney in the White Plains Case, said the arrest in Tampa stems from the FBI's embarrassment over Keiser's success in luring Wilson from Libya to the United States.

Aronwald said Keiser's arrest in Tampa, 'stinks... I think when you look deep enough, the smell is at the door of the FBI.'

In an indictment returned last week, Keiser, Roy T. Dunn and Thomas Duarte are charged with conspiring to obstruct justice and defraud Donald Regar, former president of Tampa's Metropolitan Bank. Keiser allegedly told Regar he could help the former bank president through his connection to the Vesco case.

Authorities said Keiser was attempting to get money from Regar to pay off a debt in the White Plains case.

Although the charges against Keiser are federal, a federal attorney argued for a reduction of the suspect's \$500,000 bail. E. Lawrence Barcella, a prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney's Office, filed an affidavit supporting lower bail.

Barcella said the affidavit was out of gratitude for Keiser's help in capturing Edwin Wilson.

'I wouldn't do anything to affect guilt or innocence but if someone who has helped us says, 'Tell them about my cooperation,' yeah, I'll do that,' Barcella said.

'Ernie performed his job perfectly,' Barcella said. 'He provided to Wilson what appeared to be a safe house.'

The Sentinel reported that federal authorities also vouched for Keiser in the White Plains case.

'They confirmed that he had been of value in the Wilson case,' said White Plains prosecutor Tony Berk.